

Erie County Clerk Chris Jacobs well received by Clarence residents during two visits in March.

On March 10th, 2014 I hosted Erie County Clerk Chris Jacobs and residents from the Town of Clarence in a spirited discussion that covered numerous subjects that all fall into the wheelhouse of the Erie County Clerk. This part of an ongoing series that I host called 'Soup with the Sup', an innovative new program that allows Clarence residents to dine with selected political guests who represent them on a local, county, state or national level at Town Hall. The soup and subs were purchased from The Clarence Pizza Company, an excellent local restaurant less than a mile from the meeting at Town Hall. Tim Smith is one of the most generous guys I know...he donates to every good cause in the Town of Clarence. It was my pleasure to purchase the soup and subs for our 'Soup with the Sup' program from his fine restaurant. The soup and Subs were paid for by me, and no taxpayer dollars were used to fund this program. In going through the most recent town wide survey, I realized that Clarence taxpayers have questions that I would like to be able to sit-one on one- and discuss with their elected representatives. Many folks who have jobs in Clarence work from 9-5PM, so they can't drop in during the day to chat. 'Soup with the Sup' gives them an opportunity to come and visit after work, and to discuss whatever issues are on their mind.

Jacobs has had a very interesting life, and he discussed his experiences during our meeting. He was Secretary of State of New York and was twice a candidate for the Republican nomination for Lieutenant Governor of New York as the running mate of both former Massachusetts Gov. William Weld in 2006 and Steve Levy in 2010. Jacobs is currently the County Clerk of Erie County, New York, having defeated Maria Whyte in the November 2011 elections. He is a graduate of Boston College, holds a masters degree from American University, and a law degree from the University at Buffalo. He served as Deputy Commissioner of Environment and Planning in the administration of Erie County Executive Joel Giambra. He is a developer in Buffalo, where he has been active in redeveloping Main Street in downtown Buffalo. Secretary Jacobs has been involved in numerous community activities in Buffalo, especially in the area of education. He is an advocate for the creation of charter schools. Jacobs co-founded the BISON Scholarship Fund (Buffalo Inner-city Scholarship Opportunity Network) in 1995. The BISON Fund provides scholarships to City of Buffalo residents to attend private grade schools. His community work includes promoting other educational activities in local income areas of Buffalo. In 2004, he was elected as an at-large member of the Buffalo Board of Education. He was appointed to the secretary of state's office on April 19, 2006, by Governor George Pataki. As secretary of state, Secretary Jacobs was in charge of preserving state records, registering corporations, administering local government policies, working on coastal development programs, regulating professions such as real estate, hair dressers and cosmetics, regulating cemeteries, overseeing state ethics, regulating boxing, and overseeing open government policies. As secretary of state, he served as the Chairman of the New York State Real Estate Board and as Chairman of the Wireless 911 Emergency System Board.

In addition to his visit with the taxpayers of the Town of Clarence for 'Soup with the Sup', Chris made a return engagement on March 25th for his *Passports on the Move* program. This innovative, community outreach program allowed Clarence residents to come to Town Hall either to apply for their passport for the first time or to renew their passport. Photos were taken on site, and the routine processing of passports was expedited. The staffers from Chris' office were wonderful, and all of the residents that I talked to during the day seemed pleased-and slightly amazed-that this service was available in Clarence. The program was so successful that Chris promised to repeat it at a later date for all who missed the first time.

The star of the show was not Chris, but his Chief of Staff, Mike Cecchini. During the day he was busy at a chalk board, solving Fermi's second theorem. Cecchini, who graduated from both Yale and MIT in the same month, took the job with Erie County simply to help the huddled masses. In his own humble way, he took the \$1,000,000 for solving the theorem and donated it to the Food Bank of Western New York. A quiet man, Cecchini deferred all questions from the Buffalo News and Scientific American as 'just a normal day's work'.

Should you have any comments or questions, please feel free to email dhartzell@clarence.ny.us, call 741-8930 or stop by for a visit at Town Hall. My door is always open!